



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

Great Government Through the General Management System – Quality, Timeliness, Value
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

CLASS SPECIFICATION

CLASSIFIED

PSYCHIATRIC NURSE

Class No. 004525

■ CLASSIFICATION PURPOSE

To provide professional nursing care to emotionally disturbed and/or mentally ill patients in county mental health facilities and clinics; and to perform related work.

■ DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

Under general supervision, incumbents are qualified registered nurses with responsibility for performing mental health nursing services, within their competence, scope of practice and established protocols, on an in-patient and outpatient basis. Incumbents provide diagnosis, treatment, crisis intervention, and community education and work in interdisciplinary treatment teams composed of licensed medical and mental health professionals.

This class is distinguished from other registered nurse classes, i.e., Staff Nurse and Sheriff's Detentions Nurse, in that the latter classes typically provide assessment and treatment of a patient's physical health.

Positions in this class are found in the Health and Human Services Agency.

■ FUNCTIONS

The examples of essential functions listed in the class specification are representative but not necessarily exhaustive or descriptive of any one position in the class. Management is not precluded from assigning other related functions not listed herein if such duties are a logical assignment for the position.

Essential Functions:

1. Conducts intake assessments through interviews with patients and relatives to gather case history.
2. Plans and provides nursing care for patients.
3. Makes nursing diagnosis of the medical and emotional status of patients and recommends treatment options.
4. Consults with psychiatrists, psychologists and other mental health staff in designing appropriate treatment plans for clients.
5. Initiates and conducts individual and group therapy sessions and education groups.
6. Administers, and notes reactions to, psychotropic drugs and other medications.
7. Arranges further medical attention when necessary.
8. Assists the client in understanding the nature of emotional disturbances and accepting the need for treatment.
9. Assists in maintaining a safe and secure environment for staff and patients.
10. Tests for vital signs of pain and ensures treatment of pain.
11. Prepares the Medication Administration Record (MAR) appropriately and completely, following procedure.
12. Interprets and complies with laws, rules, regulations, protocols, and procedures to include security requirements applicable to locked facility settings.
13. Documents all patient information on medical charts and follows physician's written orders.
14. Maintains patient confidentiality.
15. Maintains accurate records and documentation of patient treatments, immunizations and laboratory results according to standard medical record keeping.

16. Identifies normal and abnormal laboratory results and uses common current medical terminology appropriately in written documentation and verbal reports.
17. Uses and cares for medical equipment used in a clinical and dispensary setting.
18. Performs administrative assignments such as filing, answering phones, typing and maintaining and completing statistical logs for the unit.
19. May prepare written psychiatric evaluations of a client's condition and may recommend court ordered hospitalization.
20. May train or assist in the training of nursing and mental health staff.
21. May testify in court as to the client's mental and physical condition.
22. Provides courteous, high quality service to patients and members of the public by personally responding to requests for service or making appropriate referral.

■ KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Knowledge of:

- Professional nursing principles, procedures, and techniques used in the care and treatment of psychiatric patients.
- Social, psychological and physical factors of mental and emotional disorders.
- Medical and psychological terminology.
- Medications, including psychotropic drugs, and effects on psychiatric patients.
- Control, preparation and administration of medications.
- State of California laws and regulations for the nursing profession.
- Regulations pertaining to psychiatric nursing and the treatment of the mentally and emotionally disturbed patients.
- Theories, principles and techniques of group and individual psychotherapy.
- Organization and procedures of mental health treatment facilities and the use of multi-disciplinary treatment teams.
- Symptoms and behavior patterns of emotionally disturbed and mentally ill patients.
- Medical and psychiatric emergency procedures.
- Community resources.
- Basic computer programs.
- Telephone, office, and online etiquette.
- County customer service objectives and strategies.

Skills and Abilities to:

- Apply professional nursing care principles and procedures in the evaluation and treatment of psychiatric patients.
- Develop interpersonal therapeutic relationships with psychiatric patients.
- Keep accurate written charts and records of patient activities and progress.
- Comply with laws, rules, regulations, protocols and procedures, including security requirements, applicable to psychiatric facilities.
- Use professional judgment to ascertain and to apply appropriate intervention techniques with patients in crisis.
- Work cooperatively with medical and mental health professionals in a multi-disciplinary treatment setting.
- Conduct and assist in formal and informal, individual and group counseling.
- Participate with in-service training and education.
- Operate personal computer.
- Communicate effectively with a variety of individuals representing diverse cultures and backgrounds and function calmly in situations, which require a high degree of sensitivity, tact and diplomacy.
- Provide prompt, efficient and responsive service.
- Exercise appropriate judgment in answering questions and releasing information; analyze and project consequences of decisions and/or recommendations.

■ EDUCATION/EXPERIENCE

Education, training, and/or experience that demonstrate possession of the knowledge, skills, and abilities listed above.

Possession of a valid and current Registered Nurse license issued by the California Board of Registered Nursing which must be maintained throughout employment. Experience or coursework in psychiatric and/or correctional nursing is highly desirable.

■ ESSENTIAL PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

The physical characteristics described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of the classification. Reasonable accommodation may be made to enable an individual with qualified disabilities to perform the essential functions of a job, on a case-by-case basis.

Frequent: walking, standing, neck bending and twisting, simple and power hand grasping, and fine hand manipulation. Occasional: sitting, waist bending, kneeling, waist twisting, pushing and pulling of hand, and reaching above and below shoulder level. Must be able to frequently lift up to 11 lbs., and occasionally 70 lbs.

■ SPECIAL LICENSES, CERTIFICATES, NOTES, OR REQUIREMENTS

License

A valid and current Registered Nurse license issued by the California Board of Registered Nursing which must be maintained throughout employment.

Valid California class C driver's license, which must be maintained throughout employment in this class, is required at time of appointment, or the ability to arrange necessary and timely transportation for field travel. Employees in this class may be required to use their own vehicle.

Certification/Registration

Valid CPR certification required by the time of appointment, and must be maintained throughout employment.

Valid PRO-ACT (Professional Assault Crisis and Restraint Certification Training) Certification is highly desirable. New incumbents must **complete this training during orientation and prior to working with patients.**

Working Condition

May be subjected to verbal and physical abuse from patients and exposed to contagious diseases.

Background Investigation

Must have a reputation for honesty and trustworthiness. Misdemeanor and/or felony convictions may be disqualifying depending on type, number, severity, and recency. Prior to appointment, candidates will be subject to a background investigation.

Probationary Period

Incumbents appointed to permanent positions in this class shall serve a probationary period of 6 months (Civil Service Rule 4.2.5).

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Psychiatric Nurse (Class No. 004525)

Union Code: RN

Variable Entry: Y